

# **Lime Township Comprehensive Plan**

## **Introduction**

A Comprehensive Plan is a general guide for the planning commission and the Township Board to utilize in considering various land use and development proposals. The plan provides for logical development of land and balances that development against the preservation of natural resources, prime farmland, and environmentally sensitive areas.

The plan is both general and long-range in nature. It divides the Township into various zones that delineate the use of land. The companion to this document is the Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map, which prescribes the specific uses and standards under which the use of land and development occurs in each zone.

Lime Township prepared its most recent Comprehensive Plan in 1998. Since that time, various portions of the Township have been annexed into the City of Mankato, and other portions have been undergoing intensive land use change, particularly with an increase in mining activities.

## **Guiding Principles**

The Township has adopted various guiding principles to frame the vision for the future of the Township:

1. Protect the health, safety and welfare of the Township.
2. Promote the preservation of natural resources, prime farmland and environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Promote the preservation of agricultural land and uses and the economic viability of farming operations.
4. Provide for a compatible land use pattern that limits existing and potential conflicts and respects private property rights.
5. Guide land uses that are in need of municipal water and sanitary sewer services in locations that provide for the efficient placement and use of municipal services and annexation to the City of Mankato.
6. Allow for the extraction of mineral deposits in a manner that is sensitive to surrounding land uses, natural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas. Mitigation of impacts of mineral extraction on surrounding uses and reclamation of the property used for mineral extraction to a condition that can be utilized for future development should be considered in the review of permitting for mining interim use permits.

7. Allow for the continuation of commercial and industrial land uses on properties within the Township that currently are used for those purposes.
8. Allow for the construction of residential uses on existing lots of record and in locations that are not prime farmland.

## **General Characteristics**

Lime is a partial geographic Township abutting the Minnesota River and Nicollet County to the west, Le Sueur County to the north, the City of Mankato and Mankato Township to the south, and Jamestown Township to the east. The topography of the Township begins as a flat plain with glacial lakes in the east, progressing into rolling uplands near the mid-point, and dropping abruptly into the Minnesota River Valley in the west. A forested area following the oversized valley wall, characterized by bluffs and ravines bisects the Township.

The varied topography of the Township is reflected in the presence of a variety of environmentally sensitive areas, including floodplains, ravines, steep slopes, woodlands, wetland and exposed bedrock formations. The presence of an environmentally sensitive feature on a parcel restricts the type and intensity of development that can occur without disruption or destruction of the environmentally sensitive area. Lake Wita and part of Eagle Lake in the eastern part of the Township, combined with four winding river miles of the Minnesota River along the western boundary comprise the Township surface water resources.

The topsoil found throughout the Township consists of glacial till, a result of receding glacial ice and flowing water, characterized by a matrix of sand, silt, clay with scattered pebbles, cobbles and some boulders. The topsoil ranges in thickness from one hundred (100) to three hundred (300) feet, except in areas near the Minnesota River where the topsoil has been eroded away, exposing the underlying bedrock.

The bedrock underlying the Township is generally sedimentary rock consisting primarily of sandstone, shale and carbonates. Shallow bedrock, specifically Jordan Sandstone, is found in significant quantities in the western side of the Township near the Minnesota River valley. The type and quality of stone found in this unique geologic feature is desirable for building material and industrial uses. It is anticipated that corporations will continue to be interested in mining those mineral resources that are cost effective to mine.

According to the Blue Earth County Assessor's office, less than 50% of the land within the Township is considered tillable due to the topographic characteristics of the Township. This is reflected in a relatively low level of agricultural activity within the Township, with the majority of agricultural activities occurring in the eastern side of the Township. Historically, the Township has had significant non-farm development due to its proximity to the City of Mankato and the shortage of desirable agricultural land.

Approximately 2,500 acres of the Township adjacent to the Minnesota River have been set aside as the East Minnesota River Game Refuge. This scenic area provides wildlife habitat and outdoor recreational opportunities characterized by unique exposed bedrock outcroppings,

rare plants and animal species, prairie land and river valley vistas. The Minnesota River itself provides limited canoeing and recreational boating opportunities. The Sakatah Singing Hills Trail affords additional recreational opportunities. This multi-use trail begins in the south central portion of the Township and extends through the southern edge of the Township until traversing Blue Earth and Le Sueur Counties to Faribault. In addition, a county boat landing on the northwest shore of Eagle Lake provides recreational access to the lake.

The Mankato Regional Airport is located in the northeast quadrant of the Township. Restrictions on development near the airport affects the type and intensity of development that can occur in that portion of the Township.

It is anticipated that continued demand for new residential, commercial, industrial and extraction uses will continue in the future. Certain types of uses are more efficiently served by municipal water and sanitary sewer than by well and individual septic system. These types of uses should be guided into the locations that can be provided service by the City of Mankato. Other types of uses do not require municipal services and can be located on land within the Township. In addition, it is not cost effective to provide water and sanitary sewer services to portions of the Township due to topography and geological conditions. The Township and the City of Mankato have had a joint Orderly Annexation Agreement since 1997. Continued cooperation between the Township and the City should be encouraged in order to promote and protect the interests of both jurisdictions.

## **Demographics**

Based on the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, there were 1,084 people living in Lime Township in approximately 380 housing units. This is a decrease from the 2010 Census, when the Township had a population of 1,395 persons living in 522 households. This decrease is primarily due to annexation of portions of the Township to the City of Mankato. There are limited opportunities for new housing units to be constructed, and as a result the population is projected to remain at around 1000 people or decrease as additional annexation occurs.

## **Existing Land Uses**

The character of the existing land use can be divided into distinct categories: Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, Recreational, Residential, and Transportation.

**Agricultural.** Agricultural uses are concentrated in the northern and eastern portions of the Township, but can be found intermittently throughout other areas. Agricultural use is focused on the production of row crops such as corn, soybeans or alfalfa, and active grazing pastures.

**Commercial.** Limited areas of commercial development have occurred in the Township, primarily along Highway 22 and CSAH 5.

**Industrial.** Several industrial sites are concentrated in the southwestern corner of the Township, with sporadic additional sites occurring elsewhere.

**Mining.** The mining and extractive land uses located within the western areas continue to shape the land and impact the quality of life of the Township residents.

**Recreational.** The Township has access to a number of recreational facilities, including the Sakatah Singing Hills Trail and Eagle Lake.

**Residential.** Residential developments have taken advantage of the more scenic areas of the township, locating primarily along the top of bluffs and in the vicinity of the wooded ravines. Some residential developments have also occurred within proximity to the City of Mankato.

**Transportation.** Major transportation routes through the Township include State Highway 22, County State Aid Highways 2, 5 and 12. A variety of township roads provide access and connectivity throughout the Township. The Mankato Area airport is located in the northeastern portion of the Township. Railroads parallel the Minnesota River connecting the City of Mankato to the Twin Cities, while providing multi-modal transportation options to industrial uses in the western portion of the Township.

## **Future Land Uses**

The various types of existing land uses are anticipated to continue into the future. Careful planning for these uses is necessary to balance the Township's guiding principles with the future use of land. The Future Land Use Map shows the future land uses for the Township. The Zoning Ordinance provides development and performance standards to implement the guiding principles and this plan.

**Agricultural.** Prime farmland is planned to be preserved for agricultural uses. These areas may also be suitable for limited development that is not dependent on water and sanitary sewer service. The areas planned for agricultural use are primarily located in the eastern portions of the Township.

**Commercial.** There are limited areas of commercial development that are already existing within the Township. These areas may be utilized for other commercial uses consistent with the requirements Commercial District of the Zoning Ordinance.

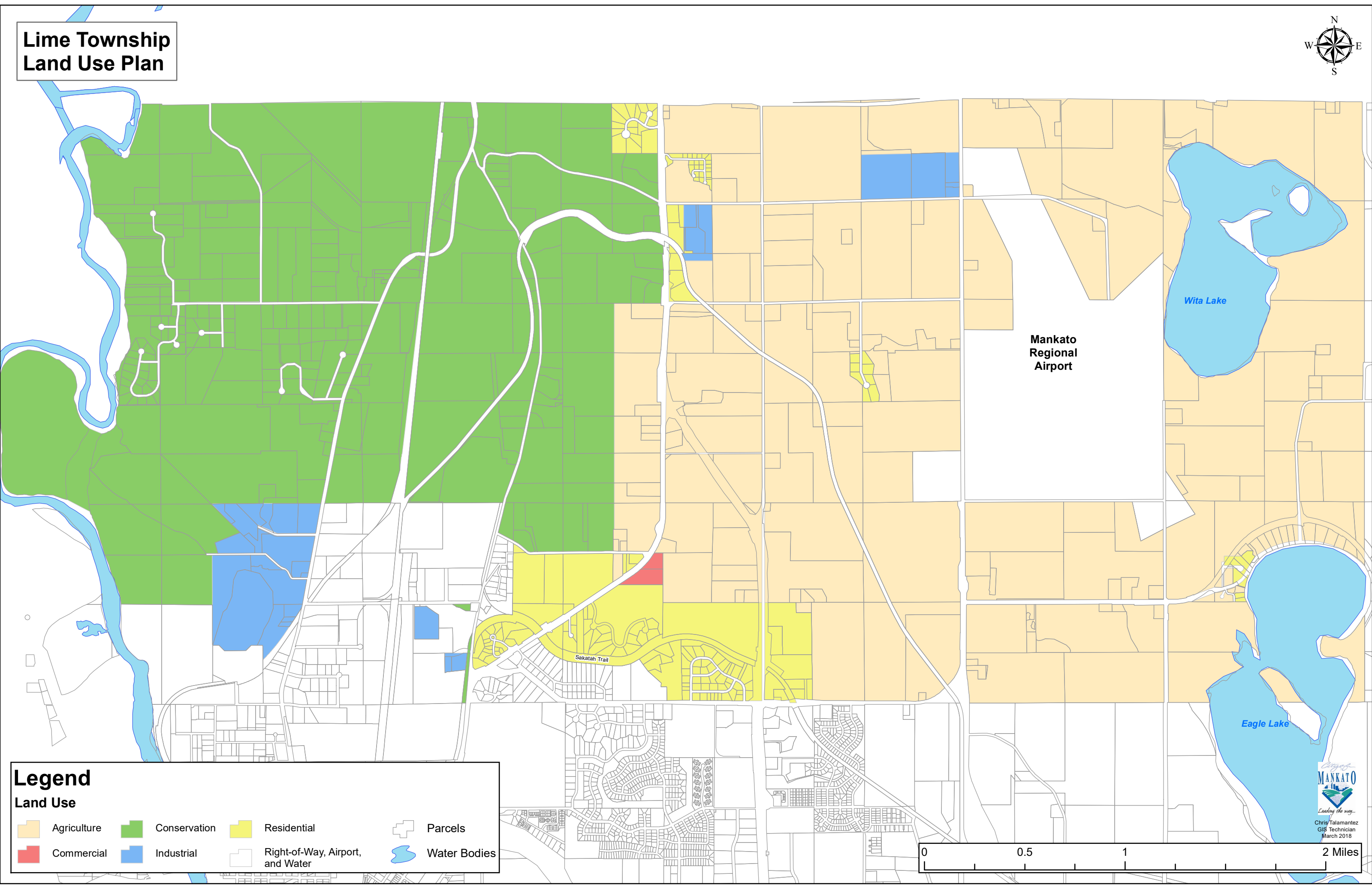
**Industrial.** There are limited areas of industrial development that are already existing within the Township. These areas may be utilized for other industrial uses consistent with the requirements of the Industrial District of the Zoning Ordinance. The mining and extractive land uses are an interim use of the property, with special care needed to address future reclamation of the land and current impacts on other properties and the quality of life in the Township.

**Conservation.** Areas guided for Conservation typically contain areas that are environmentally sensitive and are not prime farmland. Various residential uses already exist within the Conservation area. A small number of land parcels may be suitable to split into additional rural residential lots depending upon environmental constraints and availability and access to suitable well and septic sites. Zoning categories consistent with this land use are Rural Conservation and Rural Conservation – Residential. The mining and extractive land uses are a

potential interim use of the property, with special care needed to address future reclamation of the land and current impacts on other properties and the quality of life in the Township.

**Residential.** Areas guided for Residential uses are typically already being used for residential purposes. Limited opportunities exist in these areas for new construction. Zoning categories consistent with this land use are Rural Residential, Residential Fringe and Agricultural.

**Lime Township  
Land Use Plan**



**Legend**

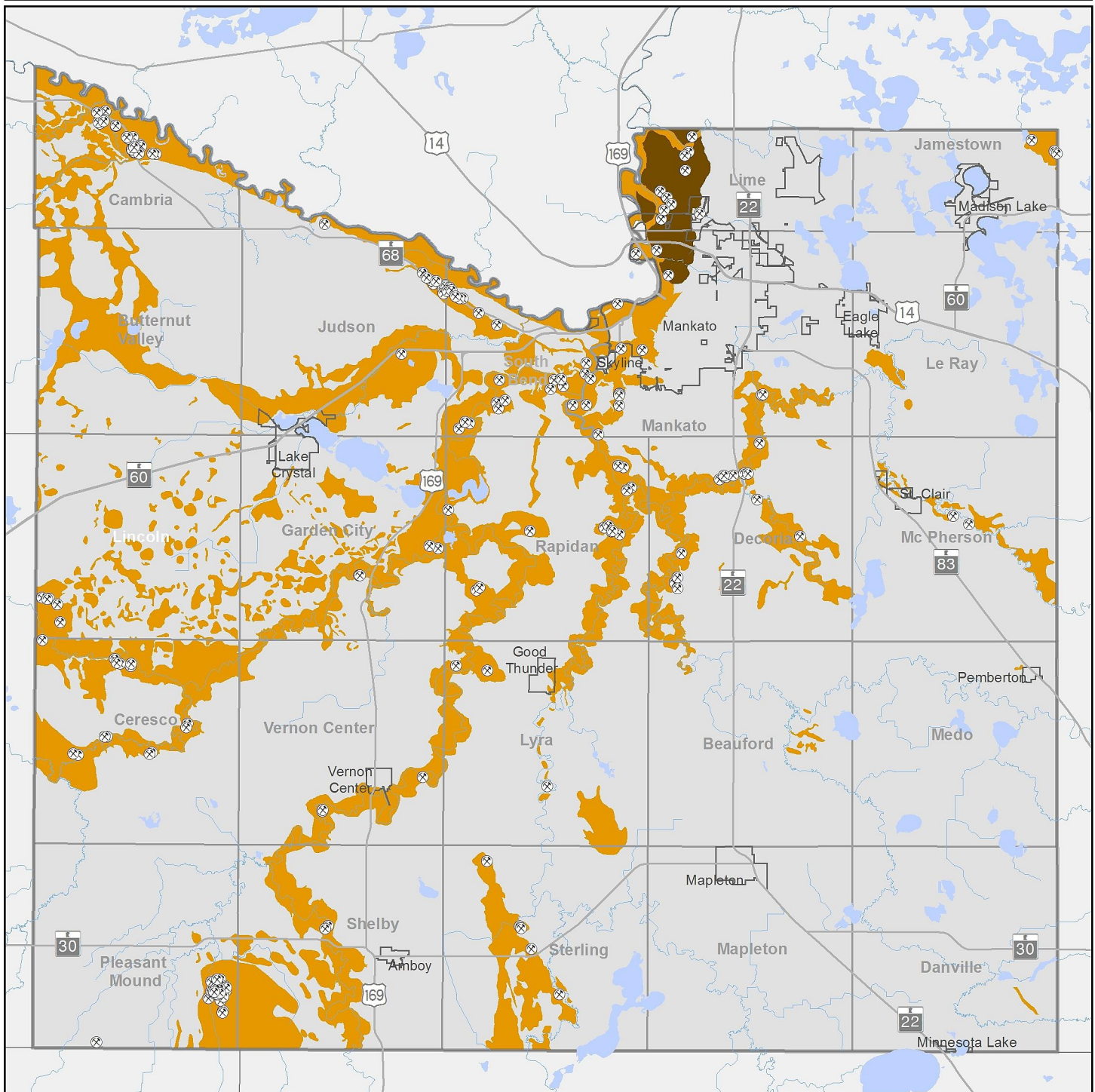
**Land Use**

- |             |              |                                  |              |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Agriculture | Conservation | Residential                      | Parcels      |
| Commercial  | Industrial   | Right-of-Way, Airport, and Water | Water Bodies |





# Aggregate Potential



- ⊗ Gravel Pits, Quarries, and Prospects
- Potential Crushed Stone Resources
- Potential Sand and Gravel Resources
- Limited Potential for Aggregate Resources

0 5 10 Miles



Prepared By: Blue Earth County  
Environmental Services  
2018

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural  
Resources, 1999

Potential Sand and Gravel Resources are units that are inferred to contain moderately and highly desirable sand and gravel deposits.

Potential Crushed Stone Resources are bedrock formations that consist of desirable limestone (dolomitic limestone) that is suitable for crushing. These units are inferred to be relatively thick (>50 Ft) with overburden thickness of less than 10 feet.

Limited Potential for Aggregate Resources are units that generally have less desirable, little or no potential for aggregate resources. These units exhibit characteristics that are typically not consistent with significant aggregate deposits. (MN DNR 1999)